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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a state of the art review of intercultural awareness at the elementary and secondary school level. The key assumptions underlying this paper are two: (1) Intercultural awareness education, however many fields or special efforts are included, is increasingly becoming education for interaction in a global society or world community, and (2) the nation's schools bear a major responsibility for preparing children and youth to live in this complex world. An historical perspective on international education indicates that the establishment of UNESCO in 1945 was the most important event in this field during the post World War II era. Current developments include the passage in 1976 of an amendment to Title VI of the National Defense Education Act which authorized support for the development of international programs at the pre-collegiate level. Although there is a growing feeling that students need to know and understand more about other peoples and cultures and that as members of the human species mankind collectively influences the direction of human affairs, there are few school programs which reflect a comprehensive approach to global problems and issues. Some barriers blocking the development of outstanding school programs are the lack of adequate instructional materials, community pressure or apathy, rigid attitudes, and inadequate motivation. (Author/AM)

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# Intercultural Awareness at the Elementary and Secondary School Level

James M. Becker

## Caveats and Context

A state of the art study of intercultural awareness at the elementary and secondary school level is, at present, an impossible task. Such a study might appropriately include some assessment of school offerings in such diverse fields as bi-lingual education, ethnic heritage programs, language and area studies, multicultural projects, world history, and global perspectives education. The problems of definition and of context are real and often lead to misunderstandings and even contradictory interpretations of data. Conclusions about the kind of learning experiences or exposure students have in these diverse fields are based on limited and often outdated information. Furthermore, the role of the media as a source of young people's impressions and information is seldom taken into account.

There are no comprehensive nation-wide studies of what is being taught or otherwise provided for our children and youth in these diverse and important areas. Enrollment figures in courses such as world history, world cultures, world geography, foreign languages, ethnic studies and a host of other offerings along with a review of the most widely used instructional materials could provide some important clues. Knowledge of the work of a great many projects, organizations and other special efforts which seek to improve school programs in the various fields included under the intercultural awareness label would also be helpful in a state of the art study.

A listing of schools, special projects and talented teachers and other educators involved in these many fields, and a listing of the ideas, approaches,

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materials, techniques and activities that are being generated by them could run into several volumes.

Time, space and resource limitations as well as the author's limited knowledge of many pertinent developments in the many and diverse fields which fall under the rubric of intercultural awareness are among the many constraints which operate in providing this backdrop to a hoped-for state of the art study. This brief review and suggested context for such a study reflects the biases and concerns of one who has for years been actively involved in international, world affairs or global perspectives education.

The key assumptions underlying this paper are: (1) intercultural awareness education, however many fields or special efforts are included, is increasingly education for interaction in a global society or world community, and (2) the nation's schools bear a major responsibility for preparing children and youth to live in this complex world. The world-wide changes which are bringing about a global society are well known-communications technology, international trade, exchange programs, increased membership in non-governmental organizations, travel and tourism are providing peoples around the world with images and experiences that 10 years ago would have seemed impossible. Technology has extended the boundaries of occupations, cultural activities and other human endeavors. Developing appropriate educational responses to these world-wide changes is a major purpose of intercultural awarness education. This involves knowledge, acceptance and appreciation of diverse cultures -- whether they be from within the local community, within the nation or within the world community. It means understanding the technological developments that are shrinking

time and space; and learning to analyze and to participate in efforts to solve problems and issues which threaten humankind -- pollution, poverty, resource depletion, hunger, war.

## A Brief Historical Perspective

The idea that education can make a major contribution to understanding between peoples, cultures and nations and to the achievement of international peace is not new. Some authors trace education for peace back to the Koran, the Bible, or at least as far back as the Seventeenth Century when Comenius proposed a college to further the cause of peace. The peace congresses following the Napoleonic Wars are also cited in the literature on international education. Scanlon's documentary history suggests that in modern times the greatest efforts to promote international understanding probably occurred in the 1890's and early 1900's.[1] It was during that period that the American School Peace League and the National Education Association made special efforts at the pre-collegiate level to promote "international justice and fraternity" and to develop "world-mindedness." The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, another important agency in this field, was established in 1910.

In the early 1920's, the League of Nations which is often criticized for its failure to recognize the importance of education in its mission did, through its Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, sponsor international conferences on education and set precedents which later became important functions of UNESCO.

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[1] D. C. Scanlon, International Education: A Documentary History, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

There was much activity in the United States in this field during the 1930's. International Understanding Through the Public School Curriculum is an example of one of the important documents which served to focus attention on the issues involved in education for peace and world understanding at that time.

The establishment of UNESCO in 1945 is generally regarded as the most important event in the field of international education during the post-World War II era. One of the programs it has sponsored, The UNESCO Associated Schools -- a network of secondary schools established in 1953 and now including more than 1000 schools in over 60 countries, has sponsored numerous conferences for teachers. The East-West Major Project, concerned with the improvement of textbooks; and the UNESCO Geography series are among UNESCO's other major contributions to the improvement of international and intercultural education at the pre-collegiate level. The 1960's saw the passage by the U. S. Congress of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act which provided federal funds to stimulate language and area studies at the post secondary level. The U. S. Office of Education funded a major study in goals, needs and priorities in international education at the elementary and secondary level in 1966.[2] Known as the Anderson/Becker report, it called for a new definition of international education emphasizing the need to prepare children and youth to live in a global society. The UNESCO Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding Co-Operation and Peace, and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental

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[2] J. M. Becker, "An Examination of Objectives, Needs, and Priorities in International Education in the United States' Elementary and Secondary Schools." Report to the U. S. Office of Education on Project 6-2908, (Bethesda, Maryland, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1969).

Freedoms adopted by the General Conference in November 1974 builds upon the progress made during the last twenty-five years in UNESCO member states. It also is in keeping with the perspective on international and global education espoused by social scientists and educators in the United States. The Recommendation offers an excellent set of guiding principles for educational policy in the field of international education.

They include:

1. An international dimension and a global perspective in education at all levels in all its forms;
2. Understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures and cultures of other nations;
3. Awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations;
4. Abilities to communicate with others;
5. Awareness not only of the rights but also of the duties incumbent upon individuals, social groups, and nations towards each other;
6. Understanding of the necessity for international solidarity and cooperation;
7. Readiness on the part of the individual to participate in solving the problems of his community, his country, and the world at large.

The Report of a UNESCO sponsored "International Meeting of Experts on the Role of Social Studies in Education for Peace and Respect for Human Rights" held in Lansing, Michigan in 1976 reaffirms these goals and objectives.

These guiding principles with their focus on problem-centered education,

active participation by individuals and the importance of international cooperation might well serve to provide some common focus to the great variety of approaches found in U.S. schools. In 1976, an Amendment to Title VI of NDEA was passed authorizing support for the development of international programs at the pre-collegiate level. These recent developments suggest that prospects for improvement in this area are probably somewhat better than heretofore.

## Some Current Approaches

Much of elementary and secondary school offerings in this field still tend to convey the impression that the West is and always has been superior to all other civilizations. The Nineteenth Century position of dominance is presented as natural and its continuance into the future is indefinite. The past two decades has seen many attempts to correct this parochial and dangerous outlook. There is a growing feeling that students need to know and understand more about other peoples and cultures and about the challenges humankind faces in an increasingly interdependent world. Furthermore, intergroup tensions in the United States have sparked numerous efforts and programs designed to help students develop the capacity for understanding and working with people whose lives and background may be very different from their own. The need for schools to reflect and perpetuate cultural diversity as well as teach a commitment to an respect for values, such as justice, equality and human dignity is more widely recognized today.[3]

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[3] For a statement in cultural pluralism and the schools see -- James A. Banks, "Cultural Pluralism and the Schools," Educational Leadership, December, 1974, p. 163-166.

Current events, world history, the study of other languages, international relations courses, world problems units and the study of other nations have long been used to insert international and intercultural content into the curriculum. During the 1960's, area studies became a popular method of expanding international and intercultural awareness.

Within these various approaches there has been a growing recognition that the acceleration of human mobility and communication greatly increases cross-cultural and cross-national contact, thereby speeding up and making more complex the process of cultural change. This increasing interaction on a world-wide scale has sparked a number of new approaches emphasizing increasing interdependence, the universality of human needs, the growing similarity of human experience, and the necessity of facing up to threats to human survival on a global scale. The universality of today's social, political and ecological problems provide a logic and a foundation for much of today's international studies. Poverty, hunger, pollution, terrorism and violence, resource depletion, nuclear proliferation and the lack of international cooperation needed to tackle these issues effectively are increasingly being used as a basis for an international curriculum for man. Space exploration, environmental crises and media coverage are often used to provide a sense of immediacy and imagery that arouse student and community interest.

## Global Perspectives: A Comprehensive Approach To International and Intercultural Education

The title and content of several recent books offer evidence that scholars are increasingly offering comprehensive views on the nature of the

contemporary world. Among such books are: The Home of Man, Only One Earth, Towards a Politics of the Planet Earth, The Study of World Society, The World System, World Without Borders, and Global Reach. Efforts to spell out the educational implications of the emergence of a global age are also increasing. Evidence of such efforts can be found in several recently published books and reports, including: Edwin Reischauer's, Toward the Twenty-First Century: Challenges for Education; Education for Global Interdependence, published by the American Council on Education; Toward a Mankind School: An Adventure in Humanistic Education, by John Goodlad, et. al.; A New Civic Literacy: American Education and Global Interdependence, published by the Aspen Institute's Commission on Coping With Interdependence; Civic Literacy for Global Interdependence: New Challenges to State Leadership in Education, a report by the Council of Chief State School Officers Committee on International Relations and Robert Ward's National Needs for International Education, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University.

While schools use a great variety of labels to identify courses and units in international and intercultural studies -- bi-lingual education, ethnic origins, multicultural studies, world affairs, area studies and many others -- the context for many of these programs increasingly recognizes that we are all members of a single species, living on a single planet and sharing a common fate. There is growing recognition that patterns of transnational contacts are becoming more influential in setting the direction of human affairs.

This does not, however, mean that the diversity of humankind is being ignored. Efforts are being made that recognize that the world is composed

of many nations, cultures and peoples unequally endowed with the good things of the earth and holding different ideas about society and having different values, and that the general necessities for survival often conflict with the achievement or preservation of justice and dignity of actual people and society. Such efforts are based on the belief that identities, loyalities, rights and responsibilities are multiplied and associated with humankind as well as with smaller and more intimate groups.

## Ideals and Realities

An increasing number of individuals, in all segments and at all levels of our society, recognize the global imperative, world interdependence, of the mankind idea. A sizeable and growing number of organizations are engaged in a variety of efforts to increase global awareness.[4] Most of these individuals and organizations view the schools as appropriate vehicles for developing global perspectives.

Given these developments, one would expect to find in schools extensive, carefully-planned programs emphasizing in a variety of ways concepts of interdependence, intercultural studies, the world as a human community or world society, and of values systems emphasizing the realities of planetary living. Likewise, one would expect that a great array of educational materials and teaching strategies geared to developing abilities of youth,

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[4] For a listing of many such organizations see -- Interim Directory for the Interorganizational Commission on International Education, member organizations, contact persons, and resources. December, 1976. Write -- Jayne Millar Wood, Overseas Development Council, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 501, Washington, D. C. 20036.

and to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for living in an interdependent world would be on hand. While it is probably accurate to say that most schools give some attention to global problems and issues, and that there is a great array of materials conveying some information about or insight into some aspect of world or intercultural understanding, school programs reflecting a comprehensive view of what a world or mankind view really means are rare indeed.

Furthermore, if one can believe some of the critics, much of what is heralded as "good" global or intercultural education seems to produce disastrous results. "After 40 years of exposure to world cultures, world politics, world geography, we have turned restless, and on the world scene, more chauvinistic and militaristic than at any previous time in our history."[5] More moderate criticism and a more optimistic assessment of the kind of world American society faces and American children will be living in can be found in "America's Not-So-Manifest Destiny."[6] Nonetheless, even an optimistic observer must wonder, given the period of time the topic has attracted serious attention by educators and the large number of individuals in all sectors of society who have sopken eloquently on the need for global perspectives, why there are so few successes to report. One must assume that there are major difficulties blocking the development of outstanding school programs. A number of studies have suggested what some of these barriers might be.

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[5] Commager, Henry Steele, "The Schools as Surrogate Conscience," Saturday Review, January 11, 1975, p. 56.

[6] Cleveland, Harlan, "America's Not-So-Manifest Destiny," Atlantic Community Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 285-305.

## Analyzing the Problems

Judith Torney in "Obstacles to Global Perspectives in Education," a chapter in a book to be published later this year, prepared under the auspices of the Kettering Foundation I/D/E/A Study of Schooling Project, cites cognitive limitations, attitudinal rigidity and inadequate motivation as well as certain political geographic limitations as standing in the way of American children developing a world-wide perspective. Harold Taylor has placed considerable blame on lack of appropriate training on the part of most of the nation's teachers.[7] Lack of adequate instructional materials, community pressures or apathy, and confusion amongst the various recommended approaches have also been cited as obstacles to rapid, widespread improvements in this field.

A recent summary of major research in international socialization drew the following conclusions about American children:

1. International learning begins early in life;
2. International learning is cumulative in what children learn at one age builds upon and is influenced by what they have previously learned;
3. The time of middle childhood (grades three through eight) is an important period in international learning;
4. The beliefs, attitudes, values and knowledge individuals develop about the world differ -- each individual student brings his or her own particular configuration of orientations toward the world;

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[7] Taylor, Harold, The World and the American Teacher, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1968.

5. The mass media, especially television and newspapers, play an important role in children's international learning.[8]

Lee Anderson in a paper entitled, "Improving Global Education in the Nation's Schools: An Analysis of the Problem and Some Proposals for Action," suggest that the task of advancing global education is "more complex, more difficult, more long-range, and more fundamental than simply affecting incremental changes in school curriculum or in the education and training of teachers."[9] He cites these aspects of efforts aimed at improving global education as elements in a larger, more fundamental and more comprehensive process which he describes as culture building -- institutional development, technology development, language development and intellectual development.

## Some Encouraging Signs

Despite the criticisms and shortcomings of efforts to date, there are some causes for optimism. First and foremost is the growing recognition among educators, political leaders and leadership both in governmental and non-governmental organizations that the problems involved in helping the nation's youth to develop a global perspective are more complex, more difficult, and longer range than had heretofore been assumed.

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[8] Richard Remy, James Nathan, James Becker and Judith Torney, International Learning and International Education in a Global Age, Bulletin 47, National Council for the Social Studies, 1975, p. 40.

[9] Anderson, Lee, "Improving Global Education in the Nation's Schools: An Analysis of the Problem and Some Proposals for Action." A paper delivered at the National Council for the Social Studies Annual Convention, Washington, D. C., 1976. The paper is available from the Mid-America Program, 513 North Park Avenue, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

There is also a growing recognition that strong attachments to our highly prized diversity need not interfere with attempts to develop a global view. As Rene Dubos has said, "As we enter the global phase of human evolution, it becomes obvious that each man has two countries, his own and planet earth." A variety of new materials (see attached bibliography) communicate a more accurate sense of human similarities and differences and help students to develop more accurate perceptions of problems which transcend national boundaries. More attention to the impact of the mass media on young people's international learning[10] and the availability of materials demonstrating imaginative strategies and approaches in teaching and in learning[11] are also causes for optimism.

The growing concern in international agencies such as UNESCO is also encouraging. The 1974 UNESCO Recommendations Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom is an important policy statement bearing on vital contemporary educational issues. The growing interest in

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[10] See the work of Prime Time School Television, 100 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602. Also Television and World Affairs Teaching in Schools and a Report from the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers, and "Peoria and the World", The Peoria (Illinois) Journal Star, Inc.

[11] See especially Wood, Jayne Millar, Focusing on Global Proverty and Development: A Resource Book for Educators, Overseas Development Council, Washington, D.C., 1974. Global Development Studies, a model curriculum for an academic year course, Management Institute for National Development, New York 1973. Fersh, Symour (ed.) Learning About Peoples and Cultures, Evanston, Illinois, McDougal and Littell, 1974.

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international human rights in this country provides additional opportunities for enhancing international and intercultural awareness.[12] The resurgence of interest in citizen education and the recognition that preparation for responsible citizenship today requires multi-disciplinary efforts and includes global dimensions is a further cause for optimism.[13]

Despite the long history of efforts in this field and the number of organizations with an expressed concern for improving international education, to date the talent and resources needed for sustained efforts have not been available; nor have the existing resources been effectively mobilized.

Whether the disparity between "proclaimed ideals declared intentions" and the realities in the nation's schools will narrow in the next five to ten years may well depend on how successful SIETAR and the many other organizations with an interest in this field are in attracting support and in motivating concerned individuals to become effective supporters of international education.

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[12] For an excellent analysis of the educational implications of this Resolution, especially in the treatment of human rights issues, see Buergenthal, Thomas and Judith V. Torney, International Human Rights and International Education, Washington, D. C., U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, 1976.

[13] See Selected Readings in Citizen Education prepared for a National Conference on "Education and Citizenship: Responsibilities for the Common Good" held in Kansas City, September, 1976, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education.

# Intercultural Awareness at The Elementary and Secondary School Level: A Selected Bibliography

## Introductory Note

This all too brief bibliography is a "smattering" of a growing volume of materials in this field. It provides some notion of what is being discussed by some of the persons interested in international education at the elementary and secondary levels.

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